



## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Although there may be fewer birds, insects and flowers to see during the colder months, winter is a time to observe and appreciate how living things adapt to seasonal changes. The best way to observe this is directly, by getting outdoors despite the weather. Make a point to attend our planned outings or go out on your own. As the "father" of Canadian cross-country skiing, Jack-rabbit Johansson, used to say, you have to "get out in the woods and ski".

Adrienne & Greg

## Who We Are

We are continuing our series profiling some of our members. Here is someone well-known and loved by many members:

Pat Taylor is living proof that travel broadens a person's perspective. And, as the Midland Penetanguishene Field Naturalists Club member would attest, it also helps you appreciate how fragile our planet is, and how important it is to protect the environment.

Pat comes by her appreciation of the environment honestly. Born in the country on a farm in King Township, the youngest of 10 children Pat has always been interested in nature. Her father was an environmentalist and a keen recycler before it became in vogue. Pat recalls her eldest brother, Victor, giving her her first nature book. "It was an intriguing story. I just loved it," she says.

That love of nature endures, although Pat no longer lives in King Township, having moved to Huronia in 1983 after seeing a lot of the world. She lived for a time in both Ottawa and Montreal, but urban life couldn't keep her or her family away from the great outdoors. In fact, they escaped to the country most weekends because the city was "claustrophobic" in summer. "Every weekend we were gone," she recalls.

Her parents at one time owned an island near Perth, Ont., on the Big Rideau River, "home of the black rat snake". Each spring, Pat recalls, the reptiles would "migrate over to a rock pile, so if we were swimming or boating, they were there. I think visitors were frightened, but we were used to them, and they'd scurry away. One of them went after our cocker spaniel, Snuffy."

The area where Pat spent her early years in King Township is still a farming area, not quite swallowed up by the expanding metropolis. Her home was the second farm south of where Seneca College is today. When she was growing up, Pat remembers, horses were used to the plough fields. Those days are long passed, and not all the changes have been for the better.

Pat recalls how when she joined the workforce and commuted to her job in Richmond Hill "you used to see a little black line (of pollution) over Toronto".

*continued on page 4.....*

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Co-Presidents: Greg Lutick and  
Adrienne Jex  
Treasurer:Carolynn Fishleigh  
Secretary: Shirley Tilson  
Past President: Joanne Scott

### Editorial

You may recall that in the last issue we included a questionnaire for you to fill in, to help us with future plans for the newsletter. We received 19 completed questionnaires, and the results were gratifying to the newsletter committee. Almost all comments were positive, and we received a mandate to continue the status quo. That means more members' experiences, recipes, book reviews, club news, and stories about our members. Some of you asked for larger print. We try to type our articles in large print. As you can imagine, it is always a compromise between how much we can print, and how large the print is.

Thanks for the input, and remember, you can always let us know your thoughts and suggestions!

*Dorothy Harper, editor*

### Wolves In Awenda!

This past summer, Awenda Park naturalist Tim Tully, while chatting with landowners at Gignac Lake on the eastern boundary of the Park, heard their story of observing 5 "wolves" feeding on a carcass, in broad daylight. Photos were taken of the animals, along with their paw prints, and brought to the wolf biologist at the Haliburton Forest. On close examination of the prints, the biologist felt certain that the prints had been made by an Eastern or Algonquin Wolf. This wolf, a smaller relative of the Timber or Gray Wolf, has recently been given separate status, as a result of studies in Algonquin Park. The story from Gignac Lake, tracks found near a carcass on the S-bend in the Park and repeated reports of howling throughout the summer evenings seem to support the notion that a mated pair of adult wolves has decided to raise a family in Awenda. Stay tuned for more information.

*This excerpt was taken from the Friends of Awenda newsletter, Fall 2005 and written by Tim Tully, Park Naturalist.*



### OUR MISSION STATEMENT

*To study and appreciate nature.  
To protect and preserve wildlife and  
the environment.  
To stimulate public interest in, and  
promote protection and  
preservation of  
nature.*



### Schedule

*Here are the club meetings for the rest of the season. Check the brochure for more information.*

**WYE MARSH SNOWSHOEING**  
Saturday January 21, 2006,

**NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY**  
Thursday February 16, 2006 7:30 p.m.

**NATURE FILMS**  
Saturday February 18, 2006

**REVITALIZING AGRICULTURAL LAND**  
Thursday March 16, 2006 7:30 p.m.

**WILDLIFE REHABILITATION**  
Saturday March 18, 2006

**CRAYFISH**  
Thursday April 20, 2006, 7:30 p.m.

**ON HURONIA REGIONAL MEETING**  
April 2006

To be arranged  
Contact: Joanne Scott 549-7091

**PELEE ISLAND TRIP**  
May 27-28, 2006

**NATIVE ECOSYSTEMS**  
Thursday May 18, 2006, 7:30 p.m.

**WARBLER WALK**  
Saturday May 20, 2006

**POT LUCK AND MEMBERS NIGHT**  
Thursday June 15, 2006



# CLUB NEWS

**Sept. 15.** Bill "Batboy" Scully, a PHD candidate at the University of Western Ontario, has been conducting research on bats in the 30,000 Islands of Georgian Bay. He introduced us to the world of

bats, the local bat landscape and to one particular little brown bat that accompanied him. Bill outlined the diversity of bats around the world, then noted which bat species were most common locally and within Ontario. He outlined their behavior and noted problems or perceived problems with bats. He also offered suggestions, based on bat behavior, on ways to remove bats from an attic. Bill also runs a business that helps provide solutions to people with bat problems in the Georgian Bay/ Muskoka region. He has a website at [www.billbatboy.ca](http://www.billbatboy.ca).

**Sept. 17.** The day started cloudy but we were pleased to see the sun later. The Cochranes on Rumney Road led us through the forest along a ravine to a beaver dam fronting a marsh. Beech-drops (*Epifagus virginiana*) were in abundance under the many mature beeches along the trail. In the partly dried up beaver pond, at least 2 dozen Painted turtles and a large Snapper were soaking up the rays. Pectoral sandpipers were walking along the edges, while vultures, ravens and a Red-shouldered hawk circled overhead. An Eastern Wood -Pewee called from the trees. The Wood duck boxes seemed to be in an excellent location, but the nests had been abandoned before hatching took place. Great-horned Owls had nested successfully in the area; Greg saw a downy young one in the spring. Most impressive were the kettles of Broad-winged hawks (80?) making their way south. A tiny Wood frog showed us the way out. After a picnic lunch with the Cochranes we walked the trails at Luticks' blueberry farm. Redstarts, White-throated Sparrows, Blue-throated Green Warblers, Yellow-rumped Warblers, Blue Jays and friendly Chickadees were viewed in the trees. Also of interest was a Coopers hawk nest renovated this year by a Goshawk family. This time of year we could inspect it without being dive-bombed by a protective parent.

**Oct. 20.** Instead of our cancelled boreal forest talk, a ranger from Beausoleil Island told us about grass restoration there. We finished with a good idea of the attempts to restore native grasses in the area.

**Oct 22.** This was another hike day threatened by rain, but later redeemed by the sun. Fourteen humans and one dog met in Meaford at Beautiful Joe Park. There we viewed the monuments to the hero of that novel, as well as to service dogs everywhere. Salmon were seen in the deeper water there, but not in the shallow water further upstream where we hiked. The path to the site where John Muir lived and worked was closed; but we followed a parallel path across the river in sight of his "wooded dell". In the open areas a flock of Robins, Kingfisher, GBH catching fish and a hawk were seen. The Hawthorns and wild grapes were bearing incredibly lush and colourful fruit. In the woods were massive cedars draped with immense grape vines; Bulblet ferns dotted the ground. Hunger led us back to the park for a picnic, followed by some retail therapy in town. Meaford proves itself an excellent destination for both people and dogs.

**Nov. 17** Our speaker was put off by bad road conditions so Greg gave a slide show on Vacciniums. *Greg & Adrienne*

**Nov. 19** Betty Carter led a hike near Wymbolwood. See her account, in poetic form, on this page.

## The Missing Landmark

I led a hike in the Wildman Forest  
one evening on paths I knew well  
a loop  
one arc of which  
used only by me  
a route rather than a path  
cut across from the logging road  
to a gently-used return trail.  
At the junction, one day, I'd noticed  
garbage had been dumped --  
a grungy old whirlpool bathtub.  
The next week a sculpture had been added.  
It would amuse the hikers I thought  
as I took a picture  
and now I couldn't possibly miss the turn  
to the "almost a track"  
through thick forest  
but there were slow hikers that evening  
and it was dark when we got there  
and someone had cleared away the clutter  
and I'd unbeknownst grown a cataract  
and so Gord, though a stranger to the area  
led us across the abysmal dark  
to a clear trail I could see  
even in the/my darkness.  
I guess you can call it an adventure  
when your landmark  
has been spirited away. *Betty Carter*

## Save these Dates!

**The book club is doing "The Wild Parrots of Telegraph Hill" for our next meeting on Feb. 5th. We are going to show the docu/film first and then discuss the book/film. The meeting/film will be at Liz and Dave's house at 1:30, if anyone wants to join us. 526-8320.**

Don't forget the Club's outing to Pt. Pelee. You must reserve your room now. Call pat Taylor for details, 533-3738.

**AND.....**

Don't forget the Macgregor Point Huron Fringe Birding Festival in **late May and early June.** See the next newsletter for details.

"Well, now the pollution reaches all the way up to North Bay sometimes, and to London."

Living in the second largest country in land mass, Canadians aren't as concerned about pollution as we should be, Pat says. "We have a lot of room, and we don't have to think about it ... yet." She was reminded of this when friends from Germany came to visit Pat and her husband. "We took them up to Geraldton, and they couldn't get over all the space and wilderness, and how, instead of picking up every scrap, (Canadians) left it there to rot." It was an eye-opener for her visitors and for Pat. But then, being a world traveller, Pat knows how educational being in a different setting can be.

Her formal education included attending the High School of Commerce. She worked as an accountant and then married one. Pat stayed home to raise a family of four children and then worked in direct sales. The Taylors moved around a quite a bit and Pat changed careers "a few times". Moving back to Ontario after living in Montreal, she worked for the provincial government on the planning of the Trent-Severn waterway. Next, she returned to school, taking a Christian studies program at York University before going to work for the church.

While working for the church Pat made unforgettable trips to such varied places as Brazil, El Salvador, Tanzania, Kenya and Alaska. In addition, she, her husband and a daughter trekked through the Alps, and she has vivid memories of seeing dolphins and seals while sailing off Victoria, B.C., with her eldest brother.

Her appreciation of nature these days is centred in Huronia. Pat and her husband bought a lot in 1982 to build a cottage, and they started coming to the area the following year. Being a champion of recycling, it's likely that Pat's father would approve of her Huronia home. It has the distinction of being the second house to be made of logs from the old railway trestle bridge near Port McNicoll, a local landmark.

Their kids have grown up and are occupied with their own families, but all of them share Pat's interest in canoeing and the environment. "Three have followed me to the area," Pat says. "The other one is living in the wilds of Montreal."

Pat says she became an instant birding enthusiast after she went on her first count with Doris Henley a decade ago. The field naturalists' club is like family to Pat because of the great people, and the enjoyable times she's shared with members, both listening to inspiring speakers and partaking in outings. One of her favourite outings was a week-long canoe retreat to the north channel. It involved Pat and 14 other adventurers travelling in two big Montreal canoes ("everything went inside"), spending nights in sleeping bags on giant rocks, and taking in an awesome meteor shower.

She talks fondly of FON trips and canoeing with the late Rev. Lloyd Delaney. On one such occasion she was with Hillary Laurence and Brenda, who both slipped into the water when their canoe tipped. Brenda was wearing shorts and Hillary had on track pants. Lloyd gallantly got out of his canoe to help and handed Pat his camera. Unfortunately, it dropped into the water. "And it wasn't his camera, either," Pat says with a laugh.

It should be no surprise that Pat is an admirer of ecology guru David Suzuki and was pulling for him to emerge victorious in last year's *The Greatest Canadian* CBC series. After all, he was the only environmentalist in the running. Suzuki is a "modern-day prophet," Pat says. "It's only a matter of time before we realize how important his work is." Suzuki's ecological message is something Pat has been living since her days in King Township.

*By David and Liz Schandlen*

## TRIPS!

*Here is a great trip one of our members has recently taken. If you've been on an interesting trip, send us in an account, and we'll print it here.*

### Birding in Ecuador

The cloud forests of western Ecuador are a feast for birders hungry to see many new species. On my trip there this past February, I recorded 87 species, most of them first time sightings for me. It was thrilling to see plate-billed mountain toucans, squirrel cuckoos and masked trogons. The lush vegetation made it somewhat difficult to spot the birds that were smaller and less colorful, but luckily we had an excellent guide who was very good at identifying bird songs.

The mountain resort we stayed at, Bellavista, is famous for its hummingbirds. I saw 24 of the amazing little feathered jewels, including violet-tailed sylphs with their long, elegant tail feathers, and booted racket-tails with fuzzy, white legs. The resort had many feeders filled with sweet water every day, so it wasn't difficult to see the hummers up close. On rainy days (of which there were a few), when other birds were hiding, the hummers would still be busily fueling up!

My most memorable bird sighting was the spectacular cock-of-the-rock. The bright red males, with lovely black and grey wings and a big poof on top of their heads, display for the females in an area called a lek. In order to see them, we had to rise at 4am, take an hour's drive, then hike a steep trail up the mountains, and wait in a blind. At sunrise (though it was actually raining) the males appeared, bobbing up and down on a branch and uttering the weirdest shrieks. They continued for about an hour then melted into the forest. It was well worth the early start and rigorous climb to see this spectacle!

*Susan Hirst*